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TWO MODERN SOCIAL PHILOSOPHIES.*

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THE followers of Comte predicted a disappearance of the traditional 'philosophy'; but present indications do not entirely fulfill their prophecy. What we find to-day is a shifting of emphasis and a re-reading of the philosophic masters. We note a tendency to eclecticism; an indisposition to construct synthetic philosophies (owing to the influence of a tentative, anti-dogmatic scientific method); and a reliance upon subjective, individual attitudes on the one hand, and an enthusiasm for a reinterpretation of objective social problems on the other. America is rich in its possession of more or less fruitful and sane speculations regarding life; while the persistence and strength of the New Thought, Spiritualism, and Christian Science betoken the constant call for an explanation which satisfies human needs and theoretical demands. If the world jars upon our delicate sensibilities, if our sympathies grow narrow, we are urged to cultivate a 'cosmic consciousness' and become in tune with the Infinite. If we are beset with worry and nerve fag, we are asked to seek power through repose and absorption in positive, expansive feelings. The apostolic casting out of devils and communion with departed spirits seem a memory; yet we are advised to think away the apparent brutality of matter and disease, and through the vast reaches of our subconscious selves enter into conversation with those who have gone into the Spirit Land.

These rejuvenations of ancient practices and doctrines

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have resulted variously in good and evil, according to Coe and James. Broadly speaking, however, they have one limitation; they are dominantly quietistic and personal in the narrow sense; they are cures for the sick soul. They tell us to believe ourselves well, to negate matter, to appeal to the vanished, and cleave to positive, expansive, and clean feelings; very much as if our beliefs, attitudes, and comfort were solely a matter of individual, subjective interest, or at most, concerned with the happiness of ourselves in relation to the small circle in which we happen to live. It is assumed that the problem of society is primarily one of picking out separate units, inducing certain chosen beliefs and practices, and allowing the resultant sunniness of temper to radiate toward our relatives and friends. Disease, grief, sin, worry, injustice, and poverty can all be transcended equally well by subjective reactions against their objective persistence; the importance of the sciences which seek to discover the processes of consciousness, the nature of sub-consciousness, the movement and composition of matter, the progress of disease and neurasthenia, the laws of the distribution of wealth, and the function of social institutions, is minimized because they are seemingly remote from that intimately subjective disposition which creates the reality of external friction.

We do not, of course, desire to disparage the therapeutic and psychological value of suggestion and of checking the 'materialistic' bias. No one can ignore the peace and joy generated in thousands of the weary and defeated and hopeless, for, to recall Baldwin, the 'subjective' moment in the dialectic of personal growth is an essential one. The point to be urged is that there are also 'ejective' and 'projective' moments, and that the dialectic of personal growth is an abstraction from a larger process of social dialectic. Our consciousness has physical, personal, and social references; and without the stimulus of extra-individual references, our merely personal attitudes take on a cramped and indi-

vidualistic color, however consoling and transforming they may immediately be.¹

In contrast with this prevalent current, there are in modern society two social philosophies which are not entirely subjective and anti-collectivistic, movements of thought which are linked with a distinguished philosophic ancestry, and have practical importance for those who believe in a union of speculation and social welfare. The two philosophies are socialism and anarchism. It is proposed to outline a few of the antecedents, characteristics, and meanings of these objective interpretations of social growth; since only the salient features can be mentioned, the danger of oversimplification and lack of balance cannot be avoided.

A preliminary contrast may be ventured. Socialism as a world-view is an outgrowth of continental rationalism as it found expression in Hegel's dialectic. Its symmetry, definite concepts, logical consistency, and emphasis upon organization and control by social machinery, show the influence of medieval devotion to a Roman Empire, a universal and militant church, Roman law, and the rationalistic eulogy of the Absolute, the One. It is born of factory, large manufacturing city, and minute industrial processes of international scope. Anarchism is born of small workshop, guild, farm, Russian mir, love of communal custom, diversified, non-centralized industry, and opposition to crystallization. On the philosophical side, it has more affinities with empiricism and the French-British simplification of motive and institution. The contrast is not entirely just to the mutations of both doctrines, as will be seen later, but, in the large, it holds true.

The strength of socialism has become apparent to the most casual and hostile reader of popular literature; and

¹ In Milwaukee a group of respectable devotees of an 'anti-materialistic' philosophy of life have refused to ally themselves with a collective movement to introduce into the public schools practical sanitary devices and instruction in some fundamental principles of social hygiene.

its importance is not limited to Finland, Germany, and England. It is an undercurrent flowing against our traditional American spirit, and is not to be measured by number of voters; subtly, by means of free-lance magazines, a radical daily press, constant propaganda, and the logic of events, it has penetrated the barrier of ostracism and misinterpretation, and its adherents can no longer assume the *rôle* of martyrs. As a philosophy, social and political, it has had a long, dramatic, and complex history; and branching from its trunk, Marxian socialism, are a host of radical offshoots more or less tenable. The form which is really militant is the revolutionary, class struggle, anti-capitalistic, surplus-value, materialistic-interpretation-of-history form,—that of Karl Marx, the spokesman of the Hegelian left. As conceived by him, it had as its background a compound of French mechanical materialism and utopianism, the utilitarian animus of the English radicals, and a reaction against, but a use of, the Hegelian dialectic. The contributions of Bentham, Ricardo, Mill, Fichte, La Mettrie, and Feuerbach to the structure of this system should not overshadow the specifically Hegelian element. The movements of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis of the Hegelian logic, terminating in the absolute idea, were used by Marx, not to prove the self-unfolding of reason, but to justify the destruction of the capitalistic *regime* (the negative moment) on the ground of its inner contradiction, and to establish the inevitable coming of the synthetic, classless, frictionless stage of the coöperative commonwealth. Hegel idealized the Prussian monarchy, its professional orders, its police, its disparagement of public opinion, its right to legislate for the non-reflective people, its devotion to war, its distribution of economic goods, and its ideal of the family. Marx claims that to identify the real with the rational is to become anti-social and non-progressive. It means eulogy of the prince, when he is no longer functioning; of war, when the working people must suffer most; of the professional

estates, philosopher, professor, lawyer, priest, and capitalist, when they are a parasitic group existing on the surplus value produced by labor. It means repression of forces working from below, in the proletariat. It sanctions inhuman competition, exploitation, destruction of the family, and the right of labor to see the meaning of its work. But he goes on to urge that the evils of capitalism, by their darkness, generate the light of the coöperative commonwealth. Economic crises, increasing centralization of the means of production, and concentration of wealth, make the 'system' too big for the capitalist; increasing poverty and exploitation breed a 'class consciousness' and power to coöperate against the professional holders of 'ideas' and resources; all these forces working together, by inevitable necessity, precipitate the third stage in the trinitarian process. The consummation, however, is not to be attained by social impulses, sentimental 'love' or sympathy, but by utilitarian counting of units of advantage, both in employer and employé. Marx assumes the right of the worker to the full product of his toil according to quantity of work or labor units; and protest against the present system arises, according to him, because workers feel that their rights and 'pleasure' are being infringed. Similarly, in his opinion, the capitalist is guided by self-regarding propensities; indeed the destruction of the present system depends upon the utilitarian calculation of increments of pleasure by the exploiting *entrepreneur* capitalist.

Workingmen are without a country because of the increasing standardization, mechanical efficiency, and division of labor: any particular region depends upon the coöperation of the whole economic world; the workers, merged into an international class, must struggle together to achieve recognition of their fundamental importance. The state, as now organized, will merge into a coöperative civil society, perfectly organized to distribute socially owned and managed goods according to

a principle of service rendered. The present professions, which are anti-social and adapted to an essentially vicious, parasitic order of things, will be transformed: the function of the professions will be met, not by privileged highly paid castes, but by the voluntary service of individuals especially fitted for specialized activities. In other words, the future society will be organized and systematized in as absolute a manner as the idea of Hegel's logic of reality.

This original Marxian position was fatalistic, dialectical, materialistic,—its large outlines romantic and Hegelian, its psychology and ethics hedonistic and utilitarian. But, in the last two decades, forces proceeding from Darwinism and the experimental sciences, and the need of adapting dogma to fact, have worked some change in the original Marxian formulas. The standpoint is known as 'revisionism,' or opportunism. Instead of a logical unfoldment of society according to economic necessity, we have a recognition of origins and sequences which cannot be told beforehand. The quantitative, inductive procedure is used; the value of remedial expedients is acknowledged; and, in general, a reconstruction of the original Hegelian-Marxian theory is taking place. Still, however, in the background is the picture of the coming society, inciting to devotion and worship; and all measures of compromise are gauged in terms of the end of the social process,—a redeemed humanity. In varying proportion the elements of the socialist philosophy already mentioned persist: its Hegelian perspective; the inevitableness of socialism; its utilitarian animus, modified by an opportunistic and experimental logic; its hedonistic ethics, modified by some appeal to social impulses; its emphasis upon struggle; its denunciation of the present capitalistic State with its arbitrary laws, judges, and priests; its economic interpretation of history; its presumption that socialization and brotherhood are best attained through organization and control, local and central, and by international division of labor;

its faith in the constructive and coöperative nature of a future civil society; and its dictum that technique and theory must proceed, not from the *élite*, the leaders, the geniuses, but from immanent forces rising out of the experience of the fourth estate, the 'proletariat.'

It is evident that socialism is not a mystical or a subjective philosophy. The forces of society are for it cosmic and extra-personal; there is no overwhelming conviction of sin, no appeal to the supernatural, no denial of the reality of food or machinery or 'matter' in any form. The workers are promised a 'world to gain'; there are the sounds of battle in each day's record of capitalistic waste of resources and of human life. Recognized ethical characteristics,—honesty, loyalty, business honor, and frugality,—are in many cases condemned, because they are class virtues hypocritically inculcated and designed to keep the working classes in subjection. Socialism is an objective, militant movement; its framework a majestic dialectic of economic environment; its psychology the anti-professional, hedonistic turn of English empiricism.

It is difficult to draw a composite picture of anarchism. One should take into account its debt to French materialism, to the impetus of the French Revolution, to the tyranny of an oriental monarchy transplanted to Russian shores, to German and French governmental oppression, and to Swiss democratic ideals; one should trace the changes of doctrine as it has evolved in nineteenth-century Russia, its amalgamation with some features of socialism; one should consider Proudhon, Godwin, Bakunin, Reclus, Tolstoi, and Ibsen. One should analyze the refinements made by advances in anthropology and the evolutionary concepts of modern science; for anarchism, too, shows development from its negative, atomistic, individualistic origins. For the sake of brevity, and because one of its most accomplished, scientific, and fair-minded exponents is still living, the present

treatment follows closely the views of Prince Peter Kropotkin, in the writings of whom may be detected the various historical threads constituting its present pattern.

Anarchism believes in a more loosely organized world than does socialism. Its early mechanistic and atomistic form, patterned after the ideal of Hobbes and Godwin, has been partly discarded by the more subtle and intelligent philosophical anarchists, such as Kropotkin, but the aversion to centralization, system, force, and delicate universal social adjustment still clings to the faith. As has been said, it is a doctrine born of guild and commune and small workshop, not of factory and city, like Marxian socialism. It is natural, therefore, that anarchism should oppose anything approaching a fixed, supernatural, metaphysical interpretation of life. So we find in Kropotkin an eloquent denunciation of philosophy in all its systematic metaphysical forms (outside of his own mechanical-scientific one). Poor Kant receives another drubbing because of his ambitious categorical imperative, and, as by Marx, the secrets of Hegel are mercilessly uncovered and condemned.² Kropotkin does not regard law as the objectification of truth, law and morality as identical, nor does he consider a self-evolving idea, embodied in Prussian monarchy, an outcome of history; for, as he says, "the discoveries of the nineteenth century in mechanics, physics, chemistry, biology, physical psychology, anthropology, psychology of nations, etc., were made not by the dialectic method, but by the natural science method, the method of induction and deduction."³ It is not, therefore, in metaphysics, with its praise of reason lodging in a few upper class minds,—the governing classes,—but in a democratic, hypothetical attitude to all problems, that the anarchist derives satisfaction. He finds

² Kropotkin, "Modern Science and Anarchism," N. Y., 1908, pp. 36 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

the intellectual founders of his voluntary communism in the anti-dogmatic scientists and protesters of the modern period, in Laplace, Holbach, Lamarck, Diderot, Rousseau, Godwin, Helmholtz, Mill, Darwin, Wallace, Spencer, and others,—all of them seeking in one way or another to apply a critical, unbiased method to all problems. To quote from “Modern Science and Anarchism”:

Anarchism is an attempt to apply to the study of the human institutions the generalizations gained by means of the natural-scientific inductive method: and an attempt to foresee the future steps of mankind on the road to liberty, equality and fraternity, with a view to realizing the greatest sum of happiness for every unit of human society. . . . Anarchism is a world-concept based upon a mechanical explanation of all phenomena embracing the whole of nature,—that is, including in it the life of human societies and their economic, political, and moral problems. Its method of investigation is that of the exact natural sciences by which every scientific conclusion must be verified. Its aim is to construct a synthetic philosophy comprehending in one generalization all the phenomena of nature,—and therefore also the life of societies, avoiding, however, the errors . . . into which . . . Comte and Spencer had fallen. It is therefore natural that to most of the questions of modern life anarchism should give new answers, and hold with regard to them a position differing from those of all political and, to a certain extent, of all socialistic parties, which have not yet freed themselves from the metaphysical fictions of old. Of course, elaboration of a complete mechanical world-conception has hardly been begun in its sociological part,—in that part, that is, which deals with the life and the evolution of societies. But the little that has been done bears a marked, though not often fully conscious, character. In the domain of philosophy of law, in the theory of morality, in political economy, in history (both of nations and institutions), anarchism has already shown that it will not content itself with metaphysical conclusions, but will seek in every case a natural scientific basis. It rejects the metaphysics of Hegel, of Schelling, and of Kant; it disowns the commentators of Roman and Canon Law, together with the learned apologists of the State; it does not consider metaphysical political economy a science, and it endeavors to gain a clear comprehension of every question raised in these branches of knowledge, basing its investigations upon the numerous researches that have been made during the last thirty or forty years from a naturalist point of view (pp. 53, 54).

The words of Kropotkin, here quoted, indicate the anti-dialectical, anti-metaphysical, and inductive tendencies already noted; and the reference to the sum-total-of-happiness concept would seem to reveal some predilection for the utilitarian scheme of ethics. However, the hedonistic position is greatly enlarged. Kro-

potkin's suggestive book, "Mutual Aid a Factor in Evolution," endeavors to correct an emphasis for which the Darwinians are responsible,—the exaggeration of the brutal, struggle phase of the evolutionary process. He shows how in all grades of life the social impulses have always been strong, and that, when conflict occurs, it is predominantly a group conflict. As regards philosophical antecedents, he returns to the French encyclopedists, to Hutcheson, and Adam Smith in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments," reviving the view that the moral dispositions "have developed in man from the feeling of pity (sympathy), through his ability to put himself in another's place; from the fact that we always feel pain and grow indignant when a child is beaten in our presence." Thus moral dispositions, sociability, are generated "through experience and inheritance, and subsequently perfected by further observation of social life."⁴

Control in the social world, therefore, is secured by the potency of the feeling of 'consciousness of kind.' Kropotkin felt the difficulty of all approaches to atomism,—how to organize the fragments. For evidently the social impulses are not adapted to vast world organization and supervision of industry with its necessary mechanism and functionaries, as the socialists dream; there must be a limitation of the size of groups and possibility for the individual to pass from one craft or occupation to another. In his "Conquest of Bread" (Chapter XVI) and "Fields, Factories, and Workshops" (Chapters I and II), he shows the fallacy of the economist's eulogy of the territorial division of labor; each locality must be and can advantageously be more or less self-sufficing if only the productive resources of the soil be fully utilized by scientific agencies, free and unmonopolized, and by stimulation of the 'inventive' power now lying dormant in the masses.

⁴"Modern Science and Anarchism," pp. 15, 16.

That this flexible small-group life may become possible, there must be a non-governmental communism; whatever authority exists must be the compulsion coming from the work to be done coöperatively. Kropotkin assumes that when our impulses, now repressed by external impact, are allowed free play, the dominance of creative and sympathetic tendencies ("unity of aims and mutual confidence") will insure peaceful forms and useful customs accepted gladly by all concerned. But the State, in its constitutional-monarchy and representative-government form, with its retainers and parasites, is a product of capitalism and exploitation; and all the present professions are necessarily anti-social in so far as they depend upon the holders of privilege. What is needed, preparatory to the outburst of repressed popular creativeness, is to break down the class divisions, written laws, and the authority of State and church.⁵ The individual must be emancipated from the power of the State; the principle of free agreement, leading to independent associations, which may (if it is desired) unite in federations, must be made basal. "The life of society itself," as Kropotkin says, "we understand, not as something complete and rigid, but as something never perfect,—something ever striving for new forms, and ever changing these forms in accordance with the needs of the time. This is what life is in nature."⁶

Such are the main features of a recent version of anarchism, made by an able and keen scientist. Anarchism has some aims in common with socialism. Both are revolutionary, objective movements, professing to owe their rise to demands of the fourth estate, whose

⁵ Cf. "Modern Science and Anarchism," p. 10: "Anarchism owes its origin to the free creative activity of the people, by which all institutions of communal life were developed in the past, and to a protest,—a revolt against the external force which has thrust itself upon these institutions; the aim of this protest being to give new scope to the creative activity of the people, in order that it might work out the necessary institutions with fresh vigor."

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

experience and contribution are considered fundamental and significant. Both react against reason and 'brain work' as a badge of distinction and prowess, and insist upon the value of creative labor directed toward social ends; anarchism, however, emphasizing the simpler handicraft and agriculture more than does Marxian socialism. Both are anti-metaphysical; socialism, however, owing its mold to the idealistic dialectic of a thinker summing up centuries of rationalistic thought. Both deny the validity of *bourgeois* ethics, economics, institutions, and professions; socialism aiming directly at the abolition of capitalism, at the same time upholding the authority of a civil society which shall own and control its means of life; while anarchism would abolish anything savoring of the State and governmental authority as an external means of control. Socialism has a more definite concept of a future society and a better machinery (dialectic) for reaching its goal; anarchism is more tentative, hypothetical, and flexible in method; the spontaneous creative activity of an untrammelled people guided by scientific laws and technique must determine the future form of its institutions. Socialism in its recent guise accepts present capitalistic, representative government and legislative chambers as its proper field of service; it accepts political action in the present State. Anarchism thinks that socialism, by compromise and vote getting, is becoming non-revolutionary and *bourgeois*, and cannot thereby cure the social disease. It consequently relies upon the progress of anthropological and social science to enlighten the people, and a propaganda of word and deed, hundreds of communal revolts acting as preludes to the final bursting of chains and entrance upon creative, flexible, and functional social forms.

By way of criticism it may be said that the weakness of both positions,—anarchism and socialism,—results from their philosophical and psychological antecedents; both retain the traces of their origin as reactions, and are limited in application because of the peculiar historical

conditions in which they arose. It is possible to argue that socialism, as a social philosophy, encounters the difficulty which those, at least, who have not mastered the secret of Hegel, feel,—how to connect a present empirical purpose with a final absolute purpose. Socialism in its fatalistic, rationalistic, and dialectical dress tends to dissipate attention from the concrete present problems. In its empirical, hedonistic doctrine, it is guilty of dealing with abstractions. It postulates economic men, ruthless exploiters, and distrusts the social impulses now working out in employer and employé, profession and working class, *bourgeoisie* and proletariat. It minimizes the absolute value of present ethical standards in order to show, by contrast, the superior goodness of a future society, which shall be in perfect equilibrium and without friction.

Anarchism is negative and atomistic even yet, lacking balance and definiteness, as befits its function of protest. It has an overfaith in small-group harmony, and a lack of faith in an international organization, based upon the national division of labor and interdependence. It does not recognize that even sympathy and social impulses may need control and standardization, especially under present complex conditions. Its assumed communal propensities need an objective embodiment in law and government, not only to check below-grade members of the group, but also to facilitate the energies of functional members. It directs attention to undoubted anti-social practices in law and the professions, but disregards the positive and constructive function of the established order. Although it eulogizes growth and the hypothetical logical method, it fails to give due reverence to the fact that all growth and invention depend upon an attained structure and objective conditions without which change and reconstruction are impossible. It does not see the complexity and interrelations of human society, and the ceaseless necessity of compromise and dependence of ideal upon present fact. Its adherents are either violent reactors, who see clearly present oppression and injustice,

or passive idealistic observers, laboring under conviction not of personal, but of social sin.

However, there are three problems which anarchism and socialism have brought to focus,—problems needing attention in America. 1. There is a call to revise our concept of the 'American spirit'; of the basis, under present economic conditions, of our so-called common and statutory law in relation to all classes of society, so that we may mediate between anarchistic atomism and individual rights, however tinged with mutual aid, and a dogmatic and schematized socialism. 2. There is a need for criticism and appraisal of the socialistic and anarchistic denunciation of the professions. How far have free speech, initiative, and opportunity for development been suppressed in the 'lower classes' because of the non-social attitude of newspaper, predatory-business interest, judge, and policeman? 3. There is a need for working out a consistent and comprehensive social psychology, based upon biological, statistical, and exact observation-methods. In particular, the study of the psychology of social impulses, begun by McDougall, Wallas, and Cooley, needs further refinement, so that social psychology may become the basic discipline of the social sciences and the center of remedial social practice.

Finally, modern radicalism has emphasized three valuable points: 1. There is a never-ending necessity of balancing the claims of individual freedom and social organization. Liberty is a function, not an attainment once for all. 2. The revisionist socialist and the philosophical anarchist both insist that the method of hypothesis, experiment, and investigation be used, not only in the laboratory, but also in the field of human interests, for the benefit of those who must bear the burden of our unwieldy monopolistic and competitive social system. 3. A constructive democracy means the recognition of the contribution in daily work and theory of all members of the community, and not only of the demands of privileged, possibly non-functional and parasitic, special interests,

whom chance and favor, and not service, have sent to pivotal and commanding places.

One conclusion may be suggested. The problems of modern society cannot be adequately solved by inducing purely subjective attitudes in individuals, without relation to objective communal forces conditioning personal happiness. Such social problems cannot be left for solution to fanatics who meet in dingy halls over questionable saloons; all the intelligence, fairmindedness, and technique of investigation which modern science and education have produced are needed to sift the justice of the protests of radicalism. It is not by repression, suspicion, prejudice, and aloofness, but by candor, sympathy, discussion, and participation that the philosophical attitude seeks expression. Those who believe that political and social theory and practice are in the making, need to read their Socrates once more and revive their conviction that philosophy is not only the idealization of the real, the rationalizing of established values, but also the remaking of the existent in terms of a constructive reason.

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